



Self-portrait, c. 1910

The painter Estanislau Torrents d'Amat (Marseille, 1839 - Cannes, 1916)

With the death of his parents, natives from Vilanova i la Geltrú (Catalunya), Estanislau Torrents had to move to Barcelona, where he studied at the *School of Fine Arts of Barcelona (La Llotja)*. When he was twenty-five years old, he went to Paris, and made one's debut in the *Salon* of 1864 with the oil *Une bacchante*. In the french capital he became disciple of Thomas Couture, the great portraitist, self-declared anti-realist and one of pioneers of romantic academicism.

Pensioned in Rome in 1866 by the *Provincial Council of Barcelona*, on which *La Llotja* depended, Torrents remained there until July 1871, learning wood engraving. There he engraved a portrait of the General O'Donnell, probably one of the academic works that *La Llotja* entrusted to his retired students. The same 1866, in the *Exhibition of the Fine Arts Academy of Barcelona*, presented three works: *Cap d'estudi*, *Scene at the Plaça Reial*, and his well-known *Group of young acolytes* (*National Museum of Art of Catalunya* (MNAC)), work that already situates him in the orbit of pictorial realism.



Group of young acolytes, 1866 (MNAC)

Thenceforth, he developed his whole career in France, keeping a continued presence in the parisian exhibitions and *salons* from 1873 to 1888. Torrents was awarded with a Third Class Medal at the Parisian *Salon* of 1875 for the oil *A death man*, a work acquired by the french government and actually in the *Museum of fine arts of Marseille* (MBAM).



Portrait of an old-man, c. 1890

In 1876 -year in which he probably established his permanent residence in Marseille-, he presented at the parisien *Salon* the works *Le portrait du vieux supérieur* and *La vierge au lis*. He also participated in the french magazine *L'Art: revue hebdomadaire illustrée*, illustrating with his drawings the russian campaigns of the napoleonic wars (1880).

But Torrents never interrupted his presence in Barcelona's artistic life, especially in the final stage of his career, exhibiting at the *IVth Exhibition of Fine Arts and Artistic Industries* (1898), at the *Exhibition of portraits and drawings ancient and modern* (1910), and at the *VIth International Art Exhibition* (1911), in which he presented the oils *The Clerkship* and *Abissinian chief*.



Portrait of woman
Artist's sketchbook. Charcoal, n.d.

In the twilight of his life, around 1914, he moved to Cannes, and at his death left part of his fortune to

create an annual award to the best student at the *École des Beaux-arts de Marseille*. Likewise, one hundred and fifty paintings of him began to thicken the funds of the MBAM. His work is represented too at the MNAC and at the *Museum of Digne*.

Torrents d'Amat cultivated different genres with his paintings: history, religion, customs, landscape.... His realism, sometimes with a more tortuous brushstroke (approaching to some kind of expressionist realism), sometimes more photographic or documentary in its definition, has a great strength and quality.



Andalusian beauty, c. 1900

His full immersion in french artistic life brought him closer to the tendencies that prevailed there, from Gustave Courbet –his thick and pasty brushstroke are evident- and the *École de Barbizon*, to the painters of southern France. In Perpignan a more academic side of realism was given by painters such as Josep Amouroux or Lluís Brousse, to which Torrents was not indifferent, sometimes reaching successful pictorial solutions halfway between academicism and realism, bearing in mind that his initial academic background, as well as his later baggage within the realism let it do successfully.

In some works he seems to approach the painters of the so-called brilliant realism –catalan equivalent to the French *pompier*- like Josep Serra Porson, Francesc Sans i Cabot or Benet Mercadé, but in general lines he refuses the solemnity inherited from the previous history painting.

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SELECTED ARTWORKS OF TORRENTS D'AMAT:

OIL PAINTINGS: *Une bacchante*, 1864; *Carlemany rebent una ambaixada àrab*, c. 1865; *Cap d'estudi*, 1866; *Una escena a la Plaça Reial*, 1866; *Grup d'Escolans*, 1866; *La répétition*, 1873; *Le mort*, 1875; *Jeune fille*, 1875; *Le portrait du vieux supérieur*, 1876; *La Vierge au lis*, 1876; *Vista de la Seu d'Urgell i dels seus forts*, c. 1876; *Les Gitanes*, 1881; *L'épreuve*, 1885; *Rechercher sur la trichine*, 1886; *Tête d'homme*, 1886; *Le gin*, 1887; *Tête d'étude*, 1887; *Intérieur de forge*, 1888; *Petit page*, 1888; *Self-portrait*, c. 1890; *Portrait du fils du peintre en étudiant*, 1897; *L'escribà*, c. 1911; *El Cap abissini*, c.1911; *Portrait du peintre L. Parthl.*, n.d.; *Tete de jeune fille*, n.d.; *Le doge*, n.d.; *Les moines musiciens*, n.d.; *La grande dame*, n.d.; *Portrait d'homme*, n.d.

ENGRAVING: *Portrait of General O'Donnell*, 1871.

DRAWINGS: *Drawings of the Russian campaign of the Napoleonic wars (1800-1815)*, *L'Art: revue hebdomadaire illustrée*, 1880.

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